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ABSTRACT

A review identified how the paraprofessional curricula of Technical and Further Education, Training, and Employment Queensland (TAFE-TEQ) aligned with the objectives of the Multicultural and Crosscultural Supplementation Program (MACSP). (MACSP was a program of Australia's National Policy on Languages.) The study also explained the acceptance or nonacceptance of MACSP initiatives in those curricula. Those contacted displayed greatly varying attitudes: some respondents were ambivalent, some aware of the program, some antagonistic, others committed to multicultural objectives. TAFE representatives believed that MACSP's primary objectives were unlikely to be addressed in the real world. Although respondents claimed it required expertise to discern cultural characteristics, many said that the nature of the student and the workplace are taken into account when planning TAFE-TEQ programs. They generally believed that actively seeking advice from minority groups in the curriculum development process was too time consuming. The general response of mainstream programs to multicultural objectives amounted to expressions of interest with very few people attempting to describe the multicultural teaching practices or the nature of multicultural work practices in paraprofessional positions. Some participants at an inservice seminar on MACSP indicated they were neither convinced about nor committed to the agenda of multiculturalism. (Appendixes include a 43-item bibliography, notes on the methodology, and list of 97 current directories, bibliographies, guides, and literature reviews.) (YLB)

ED 364 760

Multicultural and crosscultural supplementation program 1991 National Project

Multiculturalism in the TAFE paraprofessional curriculum

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Multiculturalism in the TAFE paraprofessional curriculum

Neil Kelly
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Summary

This review provides insight into the difficulties involved in sponsoring a 'multicultural' curriculum policy in TAFE. It is argued that these difficulties essentially derive from the existing multicultural character of TAFE.

The study supports the view that many complex cultures make up the TAFE system. Understanding these cultures is necessary, but by no means sufficient for effective multicultural or anti-racist policy.

The study shows that respondents hold diverse options regarding the content, conduct and va[illegible] of multicultural education. These notions reflect views on what constitutes an effective training program and also on the significance of each student's cultural heritage, workplace culture and TAFE institutional culture, to achieving desired training outcomes. Lack of consensus on the nature of these influences and subjects leads to a lack of coherent approaches to multicultural and anti-racist policy objectives in TAFE paraprofessional curricula.

There is no consistent usage of the language of multiculturalism. This lack of consistency relating to multicultural objectives provides opportunities for individuals, whom educational policies seek to govern, to resist the implications of those policies if they are so inclined. Multicultural objectives attempt to introduce particular points of view.

The study shows how implicit multicultural and cross-cultural 'discourses' are absorbed and adopted by teachers to sustain institutionalised racism. Ideologies or 'discourses' offer more than one point of view (see definition on p.10). While a discourse such as multiculturalism will offer a preferred perspective, alternative points of view also appear credible and tolerable within the 'discourse'. The 'discourse' then becomes the context within which people 'negotiate' between the preferred perspective and a variety of other views.

Acknowledgements

This project was assisted by Dr Parlo Singh of Griffith University, who, in the role of critical friend showed that a spectator perceives things differently from the players. To continue the metaphor, she ensured the game was not rigged, which ensured that the home team was not necessarily the winner.

Weaknesses in this report derive from the writer rather than the advice received. The editorial and administrative assistance provided by Catherine Jenner kept the project going. Thanks are due to those TAFE teachers and specialists who were willing to assist this project by telling it as they saw it. Ms Penelope Curtin assisted with substantial editing of the completed draft text.

Background to review

The Multicultural and Crosscultural Supplementation Program (MACSP) was one of the programs implemented as part of the National Policy on Languages (NPL) (LoBianco 1987) under the auspices of the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME).

The MACSP represented the first sustained attempt to address the issue of a multicultural and cross-cultural perspective for professional and paraprofessional training.

The broad aim of the MACSP was to enable students undertaking professional and paraprofessional courses to get the skills and knowledge to deliver effective and equitable services to culturally mixed clientele.

The AACLAME saw the most effective way to achieve this aim over a wide range of courses and institutions was to produce relevant curricula and resource materials and to establish or augment existing centres with a general overview of the multicultural/crosscultural area as it affects professionals and paraprofessionals.

Disciplines covered by the program included law, social work, health science, teacher education, child care, business, librarianship and industrial relations.

The program was based on submissions with projects selected by an AACLAME panel.

(Extracted from Department of Employment, Education and Training, Briefing 91/0365 prepared by Lavena Evans, Acting Assistant Secretary, Language Policy and International Relations Branch for presentation to the Multicultural Advisory Group of the University of Adelaide by Mr Peter Engel, Higher Education Division, June 1991).

MACSP in TAFE

In July 1986 the National Advisory Committee for Crosscultural and Multicultural Education (NACCME) established a task force to identify priority multicultural issues in the technical and further education sector (TAFE).

The objective of the task force was to develop a position that NACCME might adopt in relation to multicultural education in the technical and further education sector in Australia. The task force intended:

- to provide a State-by-State overview and an assessment of provisions for multicultural education in and for a multicultural society in the curricula in the TAFE sector and in TAFE teacher training and to identify principles and strategies for the future development of multicultural educational policies and practices within the TAFE sector.

After the report of the task force (NACCME 1987b) AACLAME invited TAFE institutions to submit proposals for MACSP funding in 1988–89. MACSP funded three TAFE projects in 1988, three in 1989, and two in 1991 (see appendix A). The researchers could not gain information for projects funded in 1990.

Terms of reference

The primary objective of this review was to document paraprofessional curricula in the Technical and Further Education, Training and Employment Queensland (TAFE-TEQ) sector. The secondary objective includes an evaluative element; that is, to explain the acceptance or non-acceptance of MACSP initiatives in Queensland TAFE-TEQ paraprofessional curricula. In brief the objectives for this review were to:

- identify TAFE-TEQ associate diploma courses aligned with the MACSP objectives;
- evaluate the acceptance or otherwise of multicultural and crosscultural initiatives in TAFE associate diplomas.

The report is presented as a set of issues, divided into three themes. These are:

- a consideration of the objectives of MACSP in 'real world' terms;
- the perceived status of multicultural and crosscultural objectives;
- the most effective educational design for multicultural and crosscultural learning.

The data were derived from interviews and document analysis; details of the methodology are appended to the report (appendix C). Specific courses were identified by TAFE-TEQ Associate Directors (Studies) as addressing the objectives of the MACSP. These include: the MACSP kit *Teaching in a multicultural classroom;* CNK34 Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Community and Human Services); and CNH 23 Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Library Technician Studies). People involved in the development and delivery of these course materials as well as from special support units were the primary informants for the study.

Introduction

The usefulness of findings from this review depends upon the extent to which it can clarify the MACSP idea of 'an effective and equitable service to culturally diverse clients'. To this end the researchers considered it important to adopt a socio-anthropological strategy: to start from the experienced culture of administrators and teachers, and thus attempt to understand the work processes and internal conditions affecting TAFE-TEQ paraprofessional programs.

Almost all the views presented in this report are unavoidably subjective. The researchers recognised that subjective views are the substance of TAFE-TEQ culture (and indeed all workplace cultures) and drive its work processes. That is, beliefs and values build personal and social identities as well as professional relationships. These beliefs and values in turn exist within and are regulated by institutional settings (Davies and Harre 1990).

To understand the dynamics of social relations, particularly in response to multicultural curricula, a level of analysis is needed that covers both specific, one-to-one situations and classroom relationships as well as established collective behaviours. Connell (1991) argued that social theories tend to focus on either individual agency or social structure. He proposed that policy problems require a third kind of analysis that deals with '. . . the historically constructed and collective circumstances of life, in which effects of structure can be decoded, to which personal practice is addressed, but which is reducible to neither' (p.155).

This review attempts to identify what is considered valuable in TAFE paraprofessional curricula in relationship to multi- and crossculturalism. In doing this it focusses on what TAFE-TEQ people may consider mundane about what, why and how paraprofessional training is done. A commonsense approach to the ideologies underpinning technical and further education and training will offer some clues to the boundaries and possibilities for acceptable multicultural curricula and practice. Weedon (1987), following Foucault, proposed that:

> Discourses . . . are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases (p.108).

To those outside the daily routine of classroom practice, reflections on commonsense ideas may hold keys to understanding effective policy processes. The researchers hold that to ignore the detail provided by the day-to-day classroom routine is to neglect information that it is necessary to have to make judgements about alignment of associate diploma courses with MACSP objectives.

From the outset, the steering committee acknowledged that summative evaluation of the adoption of MACSP objectives can only scratch the surface of the issues.

The objectives of MACSP in the 'real world'

To gauge the extent of adoption of MACSP objectives it is necessary to evaluate the processes integral to the curriculum development activities of TAFE; the program delivery and support structures within TAFE; and the paraprofessional work activities for which TAFE students are being prepared. In the context of these activities it is necessary to also assess work processes and relationships between curriculum makers and advisory groups; between TAFE leadership and teachers; between TAFE teachers and their students; and between

"to ignore the detail provided by the day-to-day classroom routine is to neglect information that it is necessary to have to make judgements about alignment of associate diploma courses with MACSP objectives."

TAFE graduates, their employers and clients. The successful integration of MACSP objectives thus involves an understanding of relationships between the cultures of the TAFE sector as a whole. In this respect, MACSP objectives address the relationships between cultures of colleges, workplace cultures and each student's family cultural heritage.

Those who were contacted to contribute to this review displayed greatly varying attitudes; some respondents were ambivalent; some only aware of the program; some were antagonistic; while others were committed to multicultural objectives. A cynical, though regularly expressed view, was that the TAFE bureaucracy facilitated 'passing-the-buck' of

accountability for multicultural objectives. Committed respondents saw distribution of responsibility as dissipation—allowing 'bureaucrats' to ignore those areas where MACSP

> " MACSP objectives address the relationships between cultures of colleges, workplace cultures and each student's family cultural heritage. "

objectives were not implemented adequately. These people said, in various ways, that since it was everyone's responsibility to implement MACSP in TAFE-TEQ para-professional programs, in practice nobody would because no one was really accountable.

Similarly, many of those who regarded MACSP ambivalently or antagonistically, questioned the rationale of the National Policy on Languages (which administered the MACSP) as dubious. Those who were not committed to the concept did not believe the underlying premise that a multicultural form of curricula is essential for the cultural and intellectual enrichment of students. They are sceptical that it can give better access to vocational opportunities, or could enhance foreign trade or clarify Australia's role in the region and the world (LoBianco 1987, p.191). Further, the majority of TAFE-TEQ people contributing to this review regarded attempts to discuss links between particular forms of curricula and macro-economic, social and cultural prospects as unrealistic and out of place in the real cut and thrust of daily life.

Most respondents directed inquiries regarding multi-culturalism to specialist language, access and equity or particular 'minority group' support units. Those from such

> " A cynical, though regularly expressed view, was that the TAFE bureaucracy facilitated 'passing-the-buck' of accountability for multicultural objectives. "

units who agreed to participate in this review tended to base arguments for multiculturalism on equity and economic arguments: a 'fair go' for all Australians and a desire to overcome ethnocentrism for marketing/commercial reasons;

rather than on a recognition of the importance of Australia's relationship to countries of the Pacific Rim, or on the rationale of a broad, liberal education whereby a knowledge of cultures and languages is espoused for its own sake (see below). People in specialist support units believed almost unanimously that paraprofessional curriculum in TAFE does not effectively prepare students to service their clientele in a mainstream paraprofessional role.

TAFE-TEQ culture

Noting that 'an explanation of culture is a cultural choice in itself, one can reach some broad agreement on what culture is not, more easily than finding absolute consensus as to what it is' (Totaro 1988, p.4), the researchers did not entertain arguments over definitions of culture during the data collection process. However those aspects of TAFE-TEQ culture relevant to the adoption of MACSP objectives are presented below.

Representatives of the TAFE culture believed that the primary objectives of the MACSP were unlikely to be addressed in the real world. Respondents set this 'real' world in contrast to the world of theory in general and federal government policy initiatives in particular.

The dominant concern of those who participated in this review was that TAFE-TEQ is rapidly changing; that there is widespread discontent with changes and that changes are not in the interests of those who advocate multiculturalism. Participants reported that federal training policies of the early 1990s are contributing to an ongoing shift of TAFE culture initiated during the 1980s. Trends cited as evidence of this shift included: the professionalisation of TAFE teachers through educational credentials: the apparent blurring of

"Representatives of the TAFE culture believed that the primary objectives of the MACSP were unlikely to be addressed in the real world."

institutional boundaries through various cooperative ventures between TAFE, industry and other providers of post-compulsory education and training; in the development of material; delivery of programs; granting of credit and conferring of awards.

Notably, a generally consistent view identified was that significant 'cultural' differences exist between State TAFE systems, between colleges and between program areas. However, TAFE personnel involved in this review tended not to elaborate on the character of TAFE cultures or the changes alleged to be taking place. Change was most often seen in terms of the immediate impact upon daily routine. Respondents did not, for instance, draw connections between current shifts in TAFE culture and the need of various student groups. Moreover, teachers reported increased administrative workloads and uncertainty regarding the security of their positions. In this context teachers perceived the question of whether they provide adequate services to students as another threat to their credibility.

Significantly, respondents saw change in TAFE-TEQ as a transitional phase of instability, after which undisclosed 'things' were expected to settle down. At the same time, 'things' were reported to have 'always been this way'. From this indicator of failure to adapt to profound change, it is reasonable to infer that similar intolerance of diversity could be expected from such people. Stress induced by institutional change stems from differences in operations and identity over time; stress with multiculturalism results from difference in operations and identity in one place at a given time. Generally speaking a desire for stability tends to be associated with negative attitudes towards complex diversity which are antithetical to the spirit of the MACSP objectives.

Market research

The identification and promotion of need and demand for a service are recognised responsibilities of marketing. Quality management in commercial service provision establishes customer needs and expectations relevant to the service offered, analyses customer requirements and service data, and conducts ongoing research to examine the implications of changing market needs and new technology for the continued demand for the service. These criteria apply equally to the provision of services, such as training, by the public sector. Since TAFE-TEQ curriculum development adopts the rhetoric of quality management, it was considered appropriate to use this model to examine the adoption of multicultural objectives within TAFE-TEQ curriculum development.

Using the need and demand model, respondents reported two kinds of demand for particular TAFE-TEQ programs. The first of these was oriented towards the labour market, that is, a demand for program development in line with particular job opportunities, career possibilities or further study options. The other approach interprets needs and

demand in terms of the popularity of programs — the ratio of applications to enrolments. Conflicts are reported to arise between these two types of programs which represent different interest groups. Furthermore, there also existed a generally consistent perception that industry people are not accustomed to thinking and talking about training issues; thus industrial demand for particular kinds of training is alleged to be difficult to determine.

Curriculum developers in particular suggested that a comprehensive education program is necessarily a part of all phases of consultation in curriculum development processes. A common cry from TAFE-TEQ teachers was that people within industry are lagging behind as far as recognising and responding to market forces or current economic conditions in a particular state or in the national economy are concerned.

In contrast to the TAFE-TEQ perception of inadequacies in industry personnel vis-a-vis training responses, industry representatives consulted in this study generally reported that industries, enterprises and occupations are liable to change so rapidly that their training needs cannot be confidently predicted. In addition, the increased complexity and transformation of workplace roles and duties challenges TAFE teachers' claims to industry expertise. However, many strong working relationships existing between industry representatives and TAFE-TEQ in various study areas were also described. While the criteria for selecting content for paraprofessional programs are unclear, it was obvious that multicultural objectives do not feature in those considerations.

Natural or cultural phenomena

While respondents claimed that it requires expertise to discern cultural characteristics, many expressed the view that TAFE-TEQ operatives at all levels know the nature of the student and the workplace and take them into account when planning TAFE-TEQ programs. In contrast to reports of the rapidly changing work conditions of TAFE-TEQ, respondents generally spoke of the nature of these sites/subjects as unified and stable.

Knowledge and understanding of students and workplaces was seen to be the implicit guide to professional decisionmaking and is the product of experience. On the other hand, respondents did not consider it appropriate to systematically document or monitor the nature of the workplace, TAFE-TEQ colleges or student groups. Respondents saw such activity as producing irrelevant

paperwork although nobody suggested other appropriate tests of relevance. Ironically, upon further consideration, suggestions were made in which it was agreed that the nature

> “ While the criteria for selecting content for paraprofessional programs are unclear, it was obvious that multicultural objectives do not feature in those considerations. ”

of these sites/subjects is constituted by decidedly cultural criteria—for example values— although as such they preclude measurement.

With respect to the cultures of TAFE-TEQ colleges, respondents often expressed the view that TAFE had a 'trade' or 'tech' image. In the context of the cultures of workplaces, respondents differentiated manufacturing and primary resource industries from service industries, arguing that the gender bias of teachers and support staff were perceived to represent the latter area. Men were seen to be aligned with trades and women with service industries. These comments were often given lightly and were consequently treated so. The 'tech' culture of TAFE displays a bias towards 'measurement' in evaluative or research studies; in this instance for example, it appears that TAFE-TEQ personnel perceive social and policy issues essentially in empirical terms. It is reasonable to conclude that multicultural objectives deriving from an interpretive, critical paradigm, are unlikely to make sense in an institutional setting dominated by a notion that the only issues of importance are those which can be demonstrated or proved in empirical terms.

An understanding of student culture, that would determine the need and demand for training programs, was most often perceived in terms of age and maturity criteria. So reported attempts to cater for students' 'needs' take the form of keeping minimum age requirements in mind while developing program documentation. So, those who develop

> “ Men were seen to be aligned with trades and women with service industries.”

mainstream paraprofessional programs regard particular student age cohorts as culturally monolithic blocs.

Program developers expected culturally diverse student groups to be accommodated through 'innovative' delivery strategies.

Participation

From the discussion of market research above, it is clear that the curriculum development process involves the participation of a number of stakeholders. A generally consistent perception expressed by respondents was that actively seeking advice from minority groups was too time consuming. It was considered to be the responsibility of representatives from 'minority' or disadvantaged groups to approach curriculum developers and convince them of their relevance rather than vice versa.

Many respondents cited attempts to locate and include potentially disenfranchised groups, mostly to illustrate the amount of time and energy wasted in these attempts. Curriculum developers saw disadvantaged groups to be disorganised and therefore not deserving representation. Respondents noted that where few formal mechanisms existed for incorporating minority perspectives into programs they could see little point in accommodating those differing points of view in program development and management.

Curriculum developers and program managers reported that members of 'minority' groups, once approached, did not necessarily see the relevance of the proposed service

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to their needs since initial expressions of need/demand typically do not come from them. Consequently, such people reported no sense of ownership of proposals for training programs: they make no sense in their world and they wonder why the TAFE-TEQ representative would want to get them 'bogged' in TAFE processes.

Delivery

In quality management terms, the process of designing a service involves converting a service brief into specifications for both the service and its delivery, while at the same time working within the organisation's parameters (ie. aims, policies and costs). The service specification defines the service to be provided whereas the service delivery specification defines the means and methods used to deliver the service. Design of the service specification and the service delivery specification are interdependent and interact throughout the design process (AS3904. 2(Int)-1990, p.11).

TAFE-TEQ paraprofessional programs are not necessarily developed through a formally documented service brief. TAFE-TEQ curriculum developers establish service specifications through committee-based discussions. Subsequent syllabus documentation includes both service specifications and delivery specifications, although the latter reportedly tend to be scanty. Curriculum developers report that delivery specifications tend to focus on macro issues such as full-time versus part-time requirements, capacity to deliver portions of programs (modules) in isolation from the main body of a program, and whether delivery is possible in a self-paced or on-the-job mode.

Some respondents expressed concern that outcomes specified in mainstream paraprofessional programs could not be met by some student groups (particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) within the nominal duration indicated by modules. This was seen to affect college performance indicators, leaving program areas with culturally diverse student groups appearing to be a liability to the college.

TAFE-TEQ personnel perceive that competency-based documentation of training programs is culturally neutral. Respondents did not comment on the proposition that content and outcomes documented in training programs represent a selection from the dominant culture and that the organisation of material (the time, timing, pace and place of delivery) reflect further cultural choices. The problem that such choices may not be in accordance with the preferred learning styles of particular groups of students was not generally seen to be significant. Without even considering these issues, it is not possible to determine whether delivery processes are in fact culturally appropriate to the service specification requirements. In this respect, consideration of multicultural objectives is incidental to market research activities for mainstream paraprofessional TAFE-TEQ programs.

While curriculum developers and program managers focus on producing materials, teachers noted varying degrees of compliance with respect to 'following' syllabus documents in their teaching programs. Teachers suggested that syllabus

documents were not always a significant consideration in the planning and delivery of programs. It was generally agreed that if a monitoring system were put in place the importance

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of the syllabus would be emphasised, but multicultural objectives were unlikely to feature strongly in such a process. If monitoring procedures were instituted it was agreed that there would be much more concern about what went into the syllabus in the first place, although external monitoring of teachers' work performance was seen as a threat to 'professionalism'. The argument that professionalism was public accountability did not appear to carry much favour. It was suggested that as long as applications roll in to their programs, teachers and managers are generally happy with programs.

The nature of multicultural and crosscultural learning

A substantial body of literature dealing explicitly with the topics of multicultural, crosscultural and intercultural training is currently available. In addition to this, there exist descriptions of work within diverse disciplines and at various locations, describing activities covered by the definitions adopted in the NPL and the MACSP, but which do not employ the same nomenclature. Similarly, TAFE-TEQ staff identify various areas of TAFE concern that can be either directly or indirectly aligned with multicultural objectives.

Two issues of particular concern in this review were first, to describe considerations understood as responsiveness to the needs of culturally diverse student groups. The second concern was somewhat more complex. If TAFE paraprofessional curriculum does not provide an effective service to culturally diverse student groups (as alleged by

personnel in specialist support units), then analyses of student success and failure, or explanations for the lack of consideration of multicultural objectives may provide some insight into the existence of institutionalised racism.

The general response from mainstream program areas to multicultural objectives amounted only to expressions of interest with very few people attempting to describe the 'multicultural' teaching practices in TAFE, or the nature of 'multicultural' work practices in paraprofessional positions. Teachers in mainstream paraprofessional areas saw multicultural course content or processes as competing with 'real subject matter' for time, resources and energy.

Interviewees responsible for mainstream associate diploma courses expressed the intention to 'ignore multiculturalism' in current projects, the rationale for this being that all students, if they learnt the skills and knowledge presented in that program, would be capable of delivering an appropriate

"Teachers in mainstream paraprofessional areas saw multicultural course content or processes as competing with 'real subject matter' for time, resources and energy."

and adequate service to culturally diverse clients. Explanations for this neglect tended to follow the line that priorities were determined by industry advisers in the first instance. It was noted that this explanation was used in a variety of circumstances to abnegate responsibility for those tasks perceived as low priority.

Teachers in mainstream paraprofessional programs expressed concern that Anglo-Australians tended to be much less concerned in their education than students from other cultural backgrounds. Anglo-Australians tended to focus on 'socialising', and as such were an educationally disadvantaged group. This perspective is a similar argument to that proposed by Walker (1988) who argued that minority ethnic groups, such as the Greeks, have a culture which encourages achievement, while the working class Anglo-Saxons are the real poor in Australia.

It is not correct that everyone from a minority ethnic background is culturally and socially 'rich'. Such a notion does not address issues of structural inequality, of the poverty of some ethnic groups, of the working conditions of new migrants and of discrimination at every level of the workforce. A person from a minority ethnic background

might have a rich culture, but to infer that a rich culture equals a full wallet is clearly specious. Where cultures are not valued, arguments for their richness can be turned against the members of that culture, to marginalise their educational interests.

The most sophisticated descriptions of culturally responsive curricula, at the paraprofessional level, made reference to what may be called a cultural production, negotiation or contestation model. This approach employs various strategies to raise and deal with divisive social issues in order to teach constructive problem solving and inculcate positive attitudes toward cultural difference. There was a generally consistent view expressed that such interactional and communicational skills are difficult to fit into the competency-based format adopted by TAFE-TEQ. The main reason cited for this was that meeting outcomes integral to competency-based education cannot be reduced to the performance of a single individual, since competency is a group function where outcomes are typically negotiated by the group with reference to their own terms of reference and criteria rather than some prescribed in a syllabus.

Multicultural education was generally seen by special service units as capable of being run parallel with, added onto, or rearticulated into existing courses and perceived by special service units to involve materials production and the provision of advisers and support, even though the existence of numerous bibliographies on the topic indicates plenty of material available (see appendix D). The idea that multiculturalism can be incorporated across or within current curricula implies that curricula, pedagogy and evaluation does not change. Rather, the social structures underpinning the existing curricula, defined as signifying white, urban middle class and patriarchal discourses, regulate the inclusion or otherwise of multicultural curriculum materials. Minority groups may therefore be disadvantaged.

There was a generally consistent opinion amongst advocates of multicultural objectives that cultural difference was regarded by teachers of mainstream paraprofessional programs in terms of 'deviance', 'deficit' or non-compliance to being corrected. This was perceived to be the case in relationships between TAFE-TEQ leadership and teachers; and teachers with respect to students; no views were offered with respect to workplace relationships. On the other hand, such respondents tended to view multicultural education as education of the culturally different and education about differences. The similarities between these perspectives did not appear to be immediately apparent to them.

Multicultural education, focussed on the individual, describes a paradigm where a 'normal' individual is one within the franchised class (i.e. Anglo-Saxon, male, urban middle class) and compares 'others' to this norm. In this process, the 'other' is incorporated within the discourse but kept on the margins. We, that is the Anglo-Saxon, middle class norm must tolerate and understand the 'difference' of the 'other'. The centre or the norm of this multicultural discourse does not acknowledge diversity, but sustains a view of 'others' as culturally marginal.

Advocates of multiculturalism tended to avoid giving explanations because they perceived them as unnecessary and 'long-winded'. Overall, it seems that theories of learning incorporated in TAFE-TEQ paraprofessional programs focus on individual learning rather than social learning or inter-individual learning. In this context, a form of multicultural education which focusses on the social and the social construction of the mind, thinking, and human development, is changed so that it is incorporated within an individualistic discourse. Within this discourse, each individual is expected to progress through universal stages until they develop a tolerance and understanding of other cultures.

In this discourse, cultural understanding and benevolence are emphasised, so it seems clear that an assimilationist ethic is stronger in TAFE than a multiculturalist ethic. Differences are permitted to exist on the peripheries of the mainstream culture, as long as they are not seen to penetrate or attempt

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to change the mainstream culture. Toleration of differences serves to ensure that it is controlled. Education about differences focusses, emphasises and in the process serves to reinforce differences and thereby further marginalises the 'other'. For example, differences may be constructed through categorising the 'other' as exotic, or as victims. This discourse does not contest the 'normative' status of the mainstream.

As noted above, acknowledgement of the value of multiculturalism within mainstream paraprofessional programs tended to be based on equity and/or economic rationales. However, equity tended to be argued in terms of merit: that all students ought to have access to a standard service, success being determined by intelligence and effort. Additionally, it was generally believed that more able students, expressed in terms of being bright or dull, were preferred in classrooms. The logic of institutional racism is exhibited in the filtering of equity issues through arguments that purport to be based on merit: that curriculum arrangements are basically sound, that intelligence and effort leads to success and failure is a product of laziness or stupidity.

There are three instances in which racism is affirmed. First, by means of self-exaltation on the part of the dominant group, a process which creates an idealistic image of itself. Second, by the degradation of a dominated group, and the suppression and stagnation of its culture, institutions, lifestyles and ideas. Third, by constantly depicting the nature of the relationship existing between dominant and minority groups as harmonious, thereby confirming the status quo. Where institutional culture shows these characteristics, it can be seen to sustain racism.

Economic arguments were expressed enthusiastically, but their substance within particular areas of study was not spelled out in detail. It was suggested that equity in this context might be an enterprise-specific or management concern rather than one of curriculum design. This argument proposed that market forces would weed out those enterprises that did not provide services in an appropriate manner to culturally diverse clientele. The issue of effective services seems in this respect to be convoluted by economic rationalism. In many instances, 'market forces' are seen as the final arbiter of the effective service.

Multiculturalism, from this perspective is reduced to niche marketing: if the 'culturally diverse' (the 'deficient' or 'deviant') are a viable market group, then it would be feasible to consider targeting services to their needs. This perspective shows a very technocratic approach to the provision of services in the first instance; secondly, it relies on service failure as an indicator of market needs; and thirdly, it ignores the impact of negligence on the culture of the workplace and the public perception of service organisations. A technocratic approach sees phenomena in simple cause-effect chains and aims at maintaining past practice. This may not be a viable approach in a highly competitive commercial environment or

in areas with slim profit margins. In such circumstances it is reasonable to expect that a more proactive form of service delivery would be most likely to be appropriate.

It is noteworthy that arguments for multicultural education do not appeal to standards of practice with respect to human rights (whether legal, ethical, courtesy or common sense). Such rights are advocated by the World Health Organisation, United Nations, anti-discrimination (EEO) as well as industrial relations and trade practices legislation. It would seem that rights accorded to workers are not generally seen to apply to students. It was notable that culture is expressed as contributing to the 'needs' profile of the student, which at best is seen as involving teachers and administrators in a parental obligation (*in loco parentis*). The legal right of the student to educational services and the legal obligation on the part of the teacher is less acute than those of trade or industrial relations practices. Additionally, the consideration of multiculturalism seems to focus on ethnicity. Rural, remote or small communities having particular cultural requisites for service delivery and issues of 'personal' identity (including sexual preferences) of TAFE-TEQ clientele were not mentioned.

Effective multicultural and crosscultural learning

The MACSP kit, *Teaching in a multicultural classroom* was developed by TAFE-TEQ and was intended as an in-service program for teachers. It was delivered to representatives from each TAFE college in Queensland at a seminar in December 1990. The adoption of multicultural objectives in education programs was considered in terms of 'implementation' of the kit through a 'professional development' session format (have butcher's paper, will workshop).

The seminar was conducted by a facilitator who collected the views of participants regarding multicultural education and the possibility of running in-service programs for teachers. The sentiments of the group were recorded on butcher's paper and collated as a seminar report. The issues were recorded according to the following categories: barriers to implementation, factors affecting implementation of courses, materials, resources, information and final recommendations for implementation. Participants from the seminar were contacted to describe any activities which may have resulted from the dissemination of materials.

In interviews, some of the participants indicated that they were neither convinced about, nor committed to the agenda of multiculturalism; they had been designated to attend the

workshop by their college director. Some advocates of multicultural education claimed that the approach adopted by

> “ A technocratic approach sees phenomena in simple cause-effect chains and aims at maintaining past practice. ”

the workshop was contrary to strategies of multicultural education. On the other hand, those conducting the workshop described it as in-service staff training, train-the-trainer programs for implementing the kit and the kit was seen as 'sensitising' material.

The facilitator's report noted major barriers to the successful uptake of the resources in TAFE-TEQ colleges cited by participants. These included the absence of a state-wide multicultural policy to support programs and courses within the colleges; executives within colleges were not seen to be committed to implementation of a program of access and equity which emphasises multiculturalism; the responsibility for implementation was divided between various program managers; and the materials were not included within mainstream instructional skills or advanced instructional skills courses. Additionally, the apparent initial enthusiasm of representatives who attended the seminar was seen to be likely to dissipate despite the recommendation for preparation of a report encouraging appropriate action. Our inquiries were unable to ascertain whether this actually occurred. Of the issues cited above, at the time of this review none is reported to have been addressed.

Respondents noted at the workshop that cynicism was expressed that those attempting to implement the material would not, and subsequently did not, get access to time or

> “ In interviews, some of the participants indicated that they were neither convinced about nor committed to the agenda of multiculturalism; they had been designated to attend the workshop by their college director. ”

college staff to do so. It was noted in the facilitator's report that 'mainstream' college staff would not be interested in the

material. Seminar participants later confirmed this to have been the case.

The facilitator's report notes that the material was seen as having potential use: with a fee-for-service emphasis; to overseas students; at Cherbourg TAFE College (an Aboriginal community); and within the restructuring process to make staff used to change and using new resources.

It is noteworthy that barriers to implementation were seen as internal college problems rather than in relation to the broader college philosophies in ideologies. For example, the material did not constitute, nor contribute toward the completion of a major award or gaining of a credential. Thus there was no formal recognition for TAFE teachers who might do the training.

Proposals for implementation of the MACSP material targeted external and 'exotic' groups of students on the one hand, but presented a somewhat naively value-neutral stance on a serious industrial relations issue on the other. The workshop participants saw themselves as potential facilitators of any kind of systemic change without reference to the content or

> " barriers to implementation were seen as internal college problems. "

values implied in proposed changes, or to the desirable consultation processes said to be driving the change process in Queensland at the time.

During the processes of implementation of the kit, social problems became reduced to language problems; these language problems were further reduced to become educational problems. In this double movement a whole complex set of social/industrial/cultural issues were reduced to an educational problem.

Conclusion

It is possible to gain a fairly reasonable understanding of what is going on and what may be going wrong in classrooms in terms of conflicting expectations and demands of industries, TAFE-TEQ and the culture of workers, teachers and students. Multicultural curriculum initiatives can be seen as intending to inform teachers and administrators about ethnic culture as an attempt to help them to recognise cultural conflicts and their consequences.

This strategy, although it might aid intellectual understanding, is probably useless in improving what actually goes on in industry and in TAFE-TEQ classrooms. While it is possible with committed analysis, to work out the reasons for ineffective service delivery, it is more difficult to determine an effective strategy. Such a strategy would include ensuring commitment from all stake-holders as well as participation in defining the character of the problem.

From the evidence presented in this study it appears that the issues involved are too practical; that is the knowledge base

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needed to address the complexities of institutionalised racism is too broad to be within the sphere of any one traditional discipline (or tradesperson), or to be dealt with effectively in any simple interaction between situation analysis and teacher.

A more sophisticated and long-term deployment of resources is necessary, including consideration of philosophical and ethical issues of assessment (including purpose, method, use of data etc) when applied to multicultural student bodies. In some circumstances these philosophical and ethical issues may need to be discussed at the classroom level. The strategies for dealing with quality control of the practitioners of assessment should be investigated.

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Appendix A:

MACSP projects in TAFE

1988

Sydney Technical College: *Adapt existing child care communication syllabuses and develop appropriate resources to include cross-cultural communication elements.*

Technical Education Division, Educational Department of Western Australia: *Develop and deliver appropriate courses for union officials to sensitise them to the needs of NESB members, as well as to provide information for NESB members, in their native language, to ensure awareness of rights and responsibilities.*

Batchelor College NT: *Operate an intensive workshop to research, write and produce Aboriginal language material for pre-primary and post-primary school children in bilingual programs and for literacy and language maintenance purposes (for teacher education).*

1989

TAFE Off-Campus Coordinating Authority, RMIT: *Training of tutors of TAFE and off-campus network teachers in delivery of a multicultural communication skills course.* ($8 592)

Division of Studies and Student Services, Qld Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training and Brisbane College of Advanced Education: *Multicultural teacher education in TAFE Qld.* ($40 000)

School of Community Education, ACT Institute of Technical and Further Education: *Cross-cultural training for child care workers.* ($7 700)

1991

Office of TAFE Staff Development Queensland: *Staff development program for TAFE-TEQ lecturers of NESB students* ($13 000)

TAFE-TEQ and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research: *Implementation of cross-cultural programs in TAFE-TEQ sector.* ($147 000)

Appendix B:

Paraprofessional TAFE-TEQ courses aligned with MACSP objectives

Two courses were identified by Associate Directors (Curriculum), as complying with the objectives of the MACSP. These were CNK34 Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Community and Human Services) and CNH23 Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Library Technician Studies).

The Associate Diploma program for Community and Human Services includes the following subjects: Australian Social Structure (50 hrs), Multicultural Studies (50 hrs), Social Aspects of Health (36 hrs) Social Policy Analysis (36 hrs) and Social Research Skills (50 hrs).

The Associate Diploma program for Library Technician Studies includes a core (50 hour) topic *Working with Special Groups in Libraries*. This topic includes consideration of disabilities (23 hrs), Aboriginal communities (3 hrs), multicultural services (9 hrs), literacy (9 hrs), prison libraries (3 hrs) and remote users (3 hrs).

The content orientation of both these programs accords with the objectives of MACSP; however, the program outcomes are described in predominantly cognitive terms at the low end of Bloom's taxonomy; define, examine, compare. As this study progressed, it became apparent that little benefit could be gained from focussing on these programs. Consequently the analysis was directed toward the culture of TAFE-TEQ in general.

The materials in the MACSP kit *Teaching in a multicultural classroom* cite what would probably be recognised to be *politically correct* ideas. The messages are very strong if not critical of dominant paradigms within Australian history particularly with reference to Aboriginal histories. This may not achieve the effects intended however, as McDaniel *et al* completed an extensive study which showed that:

> . . . in order to prepare teachers to deal with children from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds effectively, the training needs to be more experiential. Many experts in the field of multicultural education have called for programs which expose teachers to a wide variety of cross-cultural situations by direct experiences. It may be suggested that familiarity with written text introduces modes of thought which are not applicable to understanding the empirical world. In particular it may be that because multicultural meanings have to be made explicit in written texts in a way which is not necessary for verbal communication. Reliance on written material encourages abstract thinking out of context which is particularly suitable for scientific and logical reasoning. (1988, p.31)

In line with the perspective above, an analysis of the text in this kit was not considered to be of particular value. The findings of this study indicate that it is not possible to fix meaning in relation to the production, transmission and acquisition of materials.

Appendix C:

Notes on method

In the submission it was proposed that the project attempt to determine the degree to which specific parameters are actually used to describe curriculum format, identify curriculum forms and subsequently distinguish curricular changes in TAFE-TEQ. Thus the type of curriculum implied by the notion of an effective 'multicultural' or 'cross-cultural' vocational education and training program were able to be identified.

Recognising that cultural forms are typically defined in terms of the beliefs or assumptions of particular members, it was believed that by an examination of the multicultural curriculum the various 'cultures' or ideologies of the members could be identified. Curricular decisionmaking includes selection as well as organisation (pace, place and timing) of program content, interaction and evaluation strategies. The study proposed to identify cultural biases in such decision making.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (formerly TAFE National Centre for Research and Development) formed a steering committee for multicultural and cross-cultural supplementation program (MACSP) projects. This committee supported the proposal, subject to modifications as follows:

- revise aims and outcomes to more closely match the issues of concern to DEET and the TAFE agencies (to be advised by DEET);
- include timetable which shows 2 or 3 interim outcomes and starting and finishing dates;
- include statement acknowledging that copyright on materials from the project belongs to the Commonwealth.

Also, MACSP funding is to be acknowledged in the materials.

During the information search it was recognised that the kind of data intended to be collected required a high degree of trust from and corresponding confidentiality assured for informants. Given that the data collection and analysis was intended to be done over two months, information relevant to MACSP projects in TAFE was requested from DEET and contact people in State/Territory TAFE systems. This information was not available from DEET, and a large proportion of relevant personnel in the States and Territories were not available during the Christmas vacation.

Inability to clarify key contacts and whether those people were able and willing to contribute to the study during its early phase led to substantial delay, resulting in personnel subsequently being diverted from the project to resume prior work commitments.

Initial inquiries were lodged with all Australian TAFE systems who were contacted by telephone and letter. Requests were made for a list of paraprofessional courses offered by them. Also requested were enrolment statistics for paraprofessional courses since 1987/88 (the date of the MACSP in TAFE). This data was considered to provide an insight into the size of the sector being dealt with by the project.

In addition to this information, TAFE systems in each State and Territory were required to advise the project coordinator whether their system had a State-wide, regional or localised means of identifying mainstream paraprofessional courses whose content and/or delivery enabled students to provide effective and equitable services to a culturally mixed clientele.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research MACSP projects steering committee recognised that the study was unlikely to get the kind of information in the time available and across the spatial distribution (national survey) originally intended in the project brief. A case study approach, focussing on Queensland was recommended. Associate directors in the Vocational Education and Training Division of TAFE-TEQ were contacted by letter and approached for discussion/interview. These interviews focussed on aspects of effective and equitable services. Discussions considered culturally diverse clients in: establishing the need and demand for training services (market research), curriculum development and writing (design), teaching strategies and institutional support (delivery) and evaluation (performance analysis and improvement). Subsequently a wider cross-section of TAFE personnel were consulted.

Additionally, the MACSP-funded project *Teaching in a multicultural classroom* (produced in Queensland) was considered as a case study. TAFE-TEQ teachers who attended an implementation workshop for the kit were contacted and asked for their views on its content, structure and presentation, as well as its adoption in their own college.

The preliminary findings from these discussions were noted and discussed with Dr Parlo Singh, acting as 'critical friend' to the project. Following further clarification of issues with key informants the current report was written. Many respondents considered that their comments could compromise their standing and requested that their views be kept confidential. Consequently the names of those consulted have not been included in this report.

Appendix D:

List of current directories, bibliographies, guides and literature reviews

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